

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

375 Beale Street, Suite 510, San Francisco, California 94105 tel 415 352 3600 fax 888 348 5190

State of California | Gavin Newsom – Governor | info@bcdc.ca.gov | www.bcdc.ca.gov

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TO: Design Review Board Members

FROM: Lawrence Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)

Ashley Tomerlin, Associate Bay Development Design Analyst (415/352-3657;

ashley.tomerlin@bcdc.ca.gov)

Shruti Sinha, Shoreline Development Analyst (415/352-3654; shruti.sinha@bcdc.ca.gov)

**SUBJECT: 777 Airport Boulevard Project (Office and R&D Campus) in Burlingame, San Mateo County;
First Pre-Application Review**

(For Design Review Board consideration May 9, 2022)

Project Summary

Project Proponents

Lincoln Property Company (LPC) West (owner)

Project Representatives

Marc Huffman, LPC West (Vice President, Planning & Entitlements); Brandon Wang, LPC West (Executive Vice President); Jacob Petersen, Petersen Studio (Principal).

Project Location (Exhibits 2-3)

The project site is located at 777 Airport Boulevard in the City of Burlingame (Assessor's Parcel Number 026-344-130). The project site is bounded by Airport Boulevard to the north, Anza Boulevard to the west, the Bay Trail and the Burlingame Lagoon to the south, and a hotel to the east. The project site is 134,475 square-feet, or approximately 3.08 acres, in size.

Project Overview

The project proposes to demolish the existing hotel, café buildings, and related site improvements, and fully redevelop the site into a life sciences campus with a single 13-story building. The project would widen the existing 330-foot-long stretch of the Bay Trail passing through the project site to 14 feet (existing Bay Trail is 9 to 11 feet wide) and would extend this improved Bay Trail off-site to the edge of the Anza underpass. Additional shoreline amenities would include overlook seating, multiple tables, bike racks, a drinking fountain, and lawn seating terraces. Off-site shoreline improvements would include a new accessible path connecting the Bay Trail to the Anza Boulevard sidewalk, a picnic plaza along the lagoon, and over 15,000 square feet of native-focused coastal scrub and perennial plantings along the shoreline and on the Anza embankment.





Aerial image of existing site at 777 Airport Boulevard on the Anza Peninsula, Burlingame.

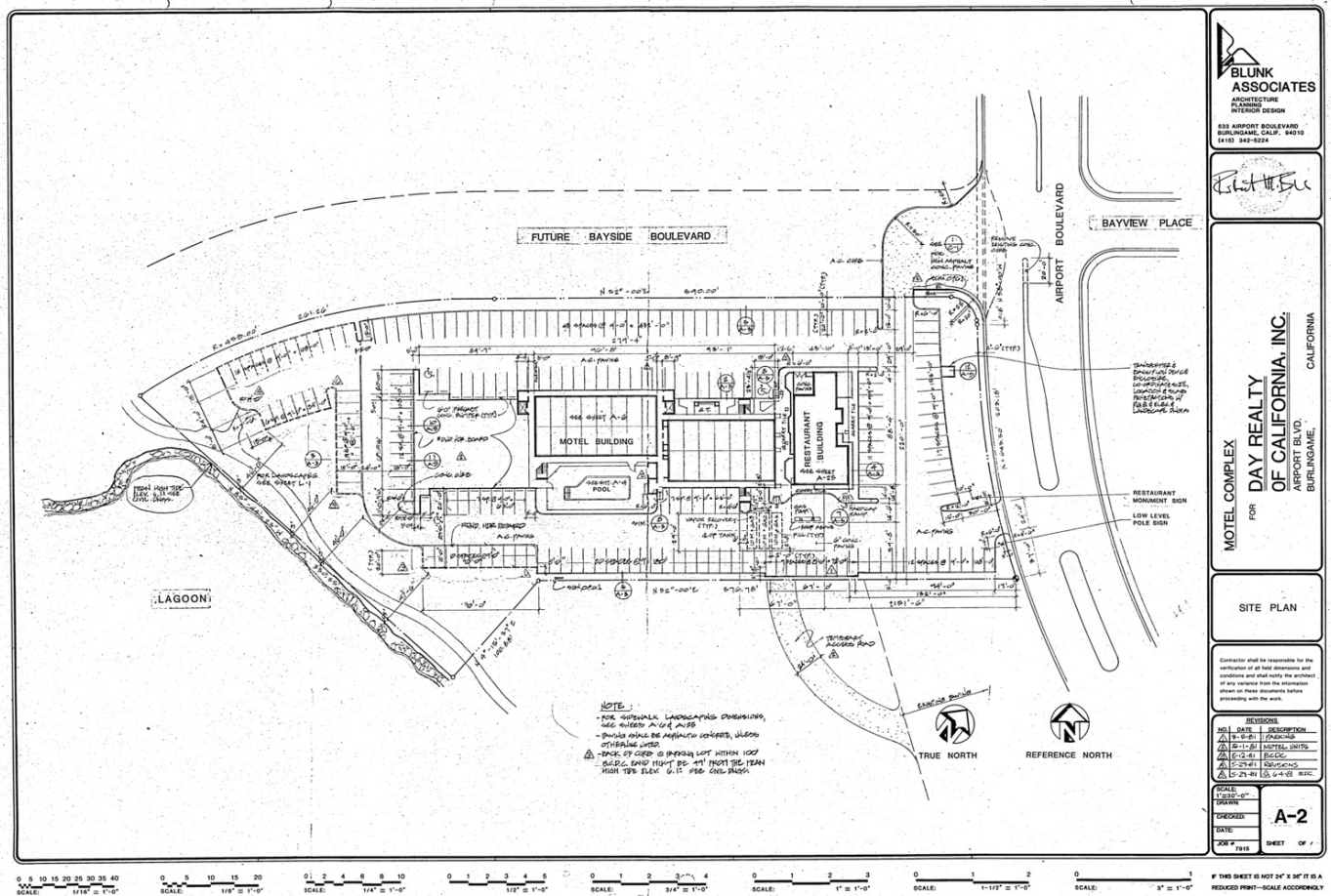
Project Site

Permit History & Existing Context

The original permitted project was a 214-room hotel (Red Roof Inn) and a 24-hour restaurant including 214 parking spaces and 21,700 square feet of landscaped public access along the Burlingame Lagoon. The applicant decided to phase the project to construct initially 144 rooms and 177 parking spaces. Authorized under BCDC Permit No. 1980.026.00 on March 27, 1981, the original project involved the construction of a hotel with the following authorized in the permit: 1) use of 9,641 square feet of paving for 28 parking spaces, 11 of which were designated for public use; 2) a 21,700-square-foot landscaped public access area, including realignment of an existing 8- to 10-foot-wide pathway; and 3) use of 450 cubic yards of top soil to construct landscaped mounds and landscape a 100-square-foot parking island.

The project has been amended twice since the original permit issuance. On August 12, 1981, Amendment No. One authorized the project to be executed in two phases and described the overall project. The applicant decided to phase the project to construct initially 144 rooms and 177 parking spaces. As a result of the decrease in project size, 22 parking spaces (totaling 3,920 square feet) were removed from the proposal. This area was required by Amendment No. One to be landscaped and used for public access under Phase I of the project, bringing the total public access to 25,630 square feet within the shoreline band. Phase I authorized the construction of approximately 5,500 square feet of paving for approximately 6 parking spaces, three of which were designated as public parking, and 25,620 square feet of landscaped public access within the shoreline band. Phase II included all work originally authorized in the permit and the remaining 70 hotel rooms and 37 parking spaces. Twenty-two of the total number of parking spaces were located within the shoreline band, and public access was decreased to the 21,700 square feet authorized by the original permit.

On December 28, 1981, Amendment No. Two authorized minor utility improvements on site. The project presented to the Board would constitute a material amendment to the existing permit (Amendment No. Three).



Site Plan from BCDC Permit 1980.026.00

Existing Public Access Conditions (Exhibit 3)

Under BCDC Permit No. 1980.026.02, there are 21,700 square feet of landscaped public access areas required at the project site, including 11 public shoreline access parking spaces. The Bay Trail is a 10-foot-wide asphalt paved trail that runs along the shoreline to the south of the project site. Existing conditions include grassy landscaping, several mature trees, two benches, trash receptacles, security lighting, and 11 public shoreline parking spaces. The public can access this area via the Bay Trail, Anza Boulevard, and Airport Boulevard. The site and shoreline are generally flat, with an average elevation of +/- 11 feet, except for the Anza Boulevard embankment along the west edge of the site which increases in height from Airport Boulevard (low end) to the Anza Bridge (high end). Views to the Burlingame Lagoon are limited to the south side of the property along the Bay Trail. There have been several enforcement violations at the site due to blocking the public access parking, all of which have been resolved.

Proposed Project

Infill Commercial Development (Exhibits 4-16, 19-22)

The purpose of the proposed project is to redevelop the site with a new office/R&D building. The project also proposes to improve the existing Bay Trail and landscape along the Burlingame Lagoon.

1. **New Structures.** The project proposes to add a new 13-story, approximately 872,000-square-foot office/R&D building. The building would consist of approximately 370,000 square feet of office/R&D space spread across the upper six stories, and the remaining approximately 501,000 square-feet of floor space on the lower six stories would be primarily used for parking as well as a lobby and support areas such as a loading dock, utility rooms and an approximately 11,800-square-foot amenity space on the first floor. The proposed floor area ratio for the site would be 3.00. The building would reach a maximum height of 226.5 feet. It would have a front setback of approximately 19 to 36 feet from Airport Boulevard, a side setback of approximately 11.5 feet from Anza Boulevard, an interior side setback of approximately 55 feet from the neighboring hotel building, and a setback averaging 65 feet from the Burlingame Lagoon. The proposed building occupancy would include approximately 1965 employees.
2. **Bay Trail and Associated Amenities.** The project proposes to widen the existing 330-foot-long stretch of the Bay Trail passing through the project site to 14 feet (existing Bay Trail is 9 to 11 feet wide) and extend this improved Bay Trail to the edge of the Anza underpass. This section of the Bay Trail would include night lighting. Additional shoreline amenities proposed by the project include overlook seating, tables, bike racks, a drinking fountain, and lawn seating terraces.
3. **Circulation and Parking.** The project proposes vehicular entrance to the site via Airport Boulevard. A service/loading zone along Anza Boulevard would be accessible via the loop road with entrance from Airport Boulevard. An emergency vehicle access entrance along Anza Boulevard would be reserved for the exclusive use of the local fire department.

The project proposes pedestrian walkways that would connect to the Bay Trail, creating three Bay Trail loops within the site. The walkways would be accessible via points along Anza Boulevard and Airport Boulevard, including the corner where the two streets intersect.

The project proposes a total of 957 parking spaces. Of these 957 parking spaces, 15 surface parking spaces would be signed reserved for public shoreline parking adjacent to the shoreline area. An additional 22 surface parking spaces are proposed along the eastern property edge.

4. **Landscape and Open Space.** The project includes 330 linear feet of shoreline frontage along the south property line. The shoreline band comprises 0.72 acres, of which 0.71 acres would be available for public access. The southeast corner of the proposed building includes 450 square feet overlap in the shoreline band, accounting for the reduction in public access by 0.01 acre.

At the shoreline edge, the project proposes a sloped lawn with integrated seating terraces that would create an informal amphitheater overlooking the activity of the central plaza and Bay Trail, while providing views across the Burlingame Lagoon. The project also proposes a layered garden of native perennials, shrubs, and trees to surround the lawn and plaza to create a wind-sheltered waterfront microclimate. In addition to daily use by employees, the project proposes to use the shoreline plaza and lawn to host informal tenant events and activities, with audience seating on the lawn and terraces.

The project includes a total of 20,560 square feet of on-site planting areas, in addition to off-site planting and irrigation improvements within the City's Anza Boulevard right-of-way. The proposed landscape improvements include five stormwater gardens, ornamental gardens, and a parking garden. In addition, the project proposes to remove approximately 88 existing on-site trees and 23 off-site trees (primarily Acacia and Eucalyptus) in order to accommodate the site and shoreline fill to provide sea level rise resiliency to prevent future flooding. The project also proposes to plant approximately 65 new trees on- and off-site.

Proposed on-site improvements include two public plazas with enhanced pedestrian paving: the 5,590-square-foot Shoreline Plaza, and the 7,290-square-foot Airport Boulevard Plaza. On-site planting combined with on-site enhanced/embellished pedestrian paving (per City Ordinance 25.36.040) would result in a combined total landscape area of 33,440 square feet, or 24.8% of the total site area.

5. **Views.** Views to the Burlingame Lagoon are limited to the south edge of the property along the Bay Trail. The proposed project would replace the Red Roof Inn with a new building, resulting in a similar condition of limited views of the lagoon from Airport Boulevard as exists now.
6. **Off-site Improvements.** The project proposes a widened 14-foot-wide Bay Trail between the property line and the Anza bridge underpass (approximately 150 linear feet), a new accessible path connecting the Bay Trail to the Anza Boulevard sidewalk, a picnic plaza along the lagoon, and over 15,000 square feet of native-focused coastal scrub and perennial plantings along the shoreline and on the Anza embankment.

Sea Level Rise (Exhibits 10-12, 17-18)

The project proposes to address sea level rise and shoreline resiliency in two stages. The initial construction of the project will raise the shoreline, Bay Trail, and adjacent open space areas to a minimum elevation of +13 feet NAVD88. The proposed 13-foot minimum shoreline elevation is based upon ESA's recommendations documented in its 2019 sea level rise and resiliency study/memo prepared for the City of Burlingame. That study describes the base flood elevation of the Burlingame Lagoon as +10 feet NAVD88 and recommends elevating the north shoreline of the Lagoon to an elevation between 11 and 13 feet. The proposed shoreline elevation meets the higher of these recommended elevations (13-foot minimum).

This first stage is expected to be adequate to provide resiliency through mid-century. The second stage of the project would raise the shoreline revetment and Bay Trail to a minimum elevation of 16 feet (NAVD 88) in the future as required by sea level rise, in conformance with the City's recent Sea Level Rise Ordinance that establishes minimum crest height elevations for the shoreline. The applicant has prepared plan and section diagrams illustrating how the initial project shoreline and Bay Trail may be adapted to a 16-foot minimum elevation.

Community Engagement

The applicant reports reaching out to the City of Burlingame to inquire if there were any community organizations or nearby vulnerable communities it should engage. The City advised that because of the commercial nature of the area there were no vulnerable communities nearby or any active residential community organizations with which to speak. Applicant reports that upon reviewing comments from environmental organizations on recent similar projects in the vicinity, it discovered a concern over the risk of avian collision and, consequently, adopted measures for bird-safe design.

BCDC's Community Vulnerability Mapping Tool indicates that while the Anza Peninsula itself is an area of low social vulnerability, there are several communities southeast of the peninsula (across Highway 101) that are categorized as having high and the highest social vulnerability. For this reason, BCDC staff advised the applicant to engage with the broader community and provided a list of community-based organizations it could invite to comment on the project at this DRB meeting and other public meetings in the future.

Approval & Construction Timeline

The project is currently in the entitlement process with the City of Burlingame. Plans have been submitted to the City and are proceeding through the City's plan check process, with a Planning Commission design review meeting anticipated in the early summer timeframe, and subsequent project approval occurring towards the end of the summer. The applicant plans to submit an application to BCDC after receiving City of Burlingame entitlements, which may occur as soon as late summer of this year. The applicant plans to begin demolition and site preparation in the fall, with construction of the new building beginning in early 2023.

Board Questions

Staff recommends the Board frame its remarks of the proposed public access improvements considering the existing permit requirements and the proposed development project. The Board may wish to refer to the public access objectives found in the Commission's Public Access Design Guidelines. Additionally, please provide feedback on the proposed public access improvements with respect to the Commission's policies on sea level rise, and environmental justice and social equity.

The seven objectives for public access are:

1. Make public access **PUBLIC**.
2. Make public access **USABLE**.
3. Provide, maintain, and enhance **VISUAL ACCESS** to the Bay and shoreline.
4. Maintain and enhance the **VISUAL QUALITY** of the Bay, shoreline, and adjacent developments.
5. Provide **CONNECTIONS** to and **CONTINUITY** along the shoreline.
6. Take advantage of the **BAY SETTING**.
7. Ensure that public access is **COMPATIBLE WITH WILDLIFE** through siting, design, and management strategies.

Staff also has the following specific questions for the Board's consideration:

1. How does the project proposal result in public spaces that "feel public," and does the project proposal allow for the shoreline to be enjoyed by the greatest number of people?
2. What advice and considerations does the Board have on using the shoreline plaza and lawn to host informal tenant events and activities?
3. What advice does the Board have for designing the public access areas and amenities to be resilient and adaptive to sea level rise?
4. Are there additional improvements that could improve the public access experience along the shoreline?